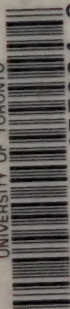


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BRITISH IMPERIALISM

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BY

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AUTHORISED TRANSLATION
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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THE origin and purpose of this monograph by an Austrian student of British politics are sufficiently explained in the Author's Preface. Baron von Oppenheimer is persuaded that the proposals put forward two years ago by Mr. Chamberlain are the inevitable outcome of the whole movement alike of British economic history and colonial policy in the last half century, and that the adoption of those proposals (or of something closely resembling them) is essential to the maintenance and security of the British Empire. These views he has set forth for the benefit of his kinsmen, especially those in that great Empire which is reproducing in so striking a manner the economic history of modern England, and therefore aims at imitating her colonial development also.

It is sometimes said that the opinion of disinterested foreign observers anticipates the verdict of history. However that may be, it is certain that as they are raised above the arena of personal and party conflicts, and are sufficiently distant to see things in their true proportions, they are able often to obtain a clearer view and juster estimate of events in a country than is possible for its own citizens. For that reason such studies as this by Baron von Oppenheimer have always a peculiar interest, and it is hoped that the present book may serve a useful purpose, in helping some British citizens to a better and juster appreciation of that great movement of which the author is so convinced an advocate.

THE TRANSLATOR.

October 6, 1905.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

My original aim in publishing this pamphlet was to contribute, in some small degree, to a better understanding and juster appreciation of British Imperialism among the German reading public. In laying special stress on the arguments which may be adduced in favour of Mr. Chamberlain's policy, I found my justification in the fact that these arguments are generally neglected or entirely ignored in Continental discussions, simply because the realisation of Mr. Chamberlain's programme is thought likely to be disastrous to the economic interests of the Continent. As I am convinced that the abandonment of England's old economic doctrine would not only increase her economic prosperity and political power, but would also check the ever-growing protectionist movements

both in Europe and America, and so lead to a far greater international exchange of commodities, I saw no reason for acquiescing in the current opinion of Continental observers.

The main object and excuse for this translation is to show to the British people that there are not lacking Continental thinkers who have grasped the far-reaching political and economic consequences of the new policy of the British Imperialists, and believe that policy to be right and necessary.

THE AUTHOR.

BRITISH IMPERIALISM

I

THE great increase of strength received by the British Empire in quite recent times, and the other changes which it has undergone, have hitherto been very inadequately realised even by those nations whose interests are most affected by them.

The increase of territory and population following on the South African War, and the development of the political organisation (especially noticeable in the formation of the Commonwealth of Australia) are not the only signs of these changes. Their most important manifestations are

to be seen in the transformation of political ideas and political thought and feeling, long in preparation and now becoming more clearly recognisable—changes which are partly the cause of Britain's political progress and are partly caused by it, and hold out a prospect of even greater and more far-reaching results in the future.

[This tendency towards internal re-organisation is commonly termed *Imperialism*. Imperialism means an enlarged idea of the nature of the State as a whole, and is the expression of a change in the conception of the British Empire, which is no longer regarded by its citizens as an Island State with dependent colonies and possessions, but as a single, world-embracing whole,] whose great self-governing parts, while on terms of equality with their Mother Country, yet

find in her their natural centre and support. An essential part of this changed conception is the consciousness of new and higher obligations towards the whole—obligations which arise from the common interests of the English-speaking race throughout the globe, and not merely from the needs of the Homeland.

That the growth of the Imperialist spirit was not connected simply with territorial expansion is most clearly shewn by the fact that the creation of that "Greater Britain," which Imperialists regard as their ideal, had already commenced at the opening of the seventeenth century, three hundred years ago, and in essentials seemed to be completed by the Congress of Vienna at the close of the Napoleonic Wars ; whereas the conscious pursuit of Imperialist aims belongs to our

own generation, and the change in the policy of the English Government, which was the necessary basis for this, is only a few decades old. For it was first under the ministry of Peel, in the early forties of the nineteenth century, that a far-seeing colonial policy began in England. Instead of trying, as previously, to govern the North American and Australian possessions by hard and fast regulations issued from London, the new policy regarded them as arbiters of their own destinies, both in their political and economic relations ; and it expected from these Colonies, besides the fullest and most speedy development of their territories, a voluntary and ungrudging adherence to their common Mother Country. However important the acquisition of fresh territory and new spheres of influence during the last half

century may seem, the Imperial progress, which has been made since Peel's ministry, is due most of all to the internal consolidation of possessions acquired before that date. It was about a century after the Treaty of Paris in 1763, whereby France ceded Canada to England, that the various provinces of Canada were united under a federal constitution ; and about the same number of years lies between 1787 (when James Cook founded the first British settlement in Australia) and the time when the endeavours of those who were seeking to unite the separately - governed Australian Colonies into a great Commonwealth, began to meet with success. The results attained a few years ago, both in the Continent of Australia and the Island of Tasmania, are all the more deserving of attention, since they are a sure omen

of the future political organisation of that empire which extends over four continents. Since the formation of the Australian Federation there has been formed for Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania (New Zealand, which is industrially very highly developed, has not yet joined in this federation) a uniform postal and telegraphic service, a common customs tariff with complete inter-colonial free trade, a common organisation and common control of national defence, and common action in regard to exterior relations. The regulation and conduct of these, as well as of the other most important matters of general interest such as taxes and duties, immigration and emigration, marriage laws, provision for the sick and aged, etc., fall within the sphere of

federal legislation ; the individual States retain undiminished authority in all things which appertain to their own particular interests, and which have not been expressly assigned to the Federal Government. It is clear how difficult and responsible a task it was to make such a demarcation between the spheres of the separate States and of the Federation, since any encroachment on the part of the latter must give fresh impetus to the separatist movement, and thus endanger the final success of the reform contemplated.

In the very remarkable speech with which Mr. Chamberlain introduced the Australian Commonwealth Bill in the English Parliament, he clearly explained the nature of this reform. Its primary object was to prevent an inevitable competition in the future between the

States hitherto independent of one another, as such competition could only lead to a weakening of them all. The purpose of the Bill was to concentrate the rival powers in common action, and, at the same time, make the relations between Australia and the Mother Country simpler, more unconstrained, and, if possible, more cordial. Thus henceforth England would deal with a single central authority instead of six governments, each independent of the other.

In contrast to the Constitution of Canada, which was the outcome of an agreement reached in London between representatives of the Colony and the Home Government, the Australian Federation is the work of Australian statesmen alone. Its constitution has the support of an overwhelming majority of the

population of Australia, as was shewn at the last plebiscite (in which Western Australia did not participate), when it was approved by 377,600 votes against 141,500. The actual way in which this result was attained would seem to secure a permanent existence for the constitution itself and for the clauses which set out the subordination of the Confederation to the British Crown, and give expression to the idea of imperial unity.

It is true that these clauses are somewhat scanty. In them, for the first time, to the prejudice of the Empire's unity, considerable encroachment has been made on the cardinal principle of English public law, *i.e.*, that the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London reserves to itself the final decision in colonial legal disputes. The constitution of the Commonwealth recog-

nises the highest Australian Court of Justice as the supreme court of appeal in all constitutional disputes between the Australian States, or between the latter and the Confederation. In all other cases an appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in England is permitted, except in cases where federal legislation approved by the Crown makes the Supreme Court of Australia the final court of appeal. The Commonwealth carries its independence to the farthest possible point. Its connection with the British Empire finds expression mainly in those clauses which assign to the monarch, or the governor-general nominated by him, the maintenance and enforcement of the constitution and laws of the Federation, and the supreme command of its forces by land and sea.

We have already noticed the different way in which the Federal Constitution of Canada was established. The powers of attraction and conciliation inherent in the federal idea were perhaps never more clearly manifested to the world than in the political development of the widespread British possessions of North America. Canada was originally a French Colony which came to England in 1763 as the spoils of war. Differences in religious belief were added to the rivalries of race and language, and accentuated by the recollection of the preceding sanguinary contest. An attempt made at the time of the census of 1881 to distinguish the different nationalities in Canada gave the following result.¹ The 60,000 French colonists, who in 1763 became English

¹ Sir Charles Dilke. *Problems of Greater Britain*, I., pp. 48-50 and p. 93, *seq.*

citizens, had by natural increase and immigration grown to the number of 1,300,000. Over against them were 1,600,000 English and Scotch, whose forefathers had lived in Canada in perpetual conflict with the ancestors of the French. The Irish, one million in number, felt themselves widely separated from the Anglo-Scotch community, in consequence of the oppression and persecution to which they asserted that they had been subjected in the past. Finally, there were a quarter of a million Germans, and the remainder of the population were Scandinavians, etc. The majority of the Irish belonged, with the French, to the Roman Catholic faith, whose members were about equal in number to the Protestants. Moreover, there was the rivalry of economic and other local interests, evidenced by the fact that the different

Colonies erected customs barriers against each other, and that each of them stood in much looser relation to the rest than to the United States, whose juxtaposition and natural power of expansion were in such circumstances a serious menace to the British possessions in North America.

For a long time the Home Government seemed powerless to deal with these difficult conditions. The hope that the French race would blend itself with the British proved altogether vain. The attempt to force English law, language, and, in part also, religion on the French inhabitants of Canada led to an open revolt, and failed as completely as the effort to destroy the nationality of the Dutch population of Cape Colony.

By 1841 English opinion was ripe for a change of policy. Canada received extensive rights of self-government.

Twenty - six years later its various provinces were united under a federal constitution. Military defence, customs, trade, coinage—in short, all that concerned the common development and the permanent conduct of matters of general interest, was entrusted to the new central authority, while henceforward only matters of local importance were to be within the competence of the provincial governments. The grant of complete autonomy and the federal organisation proved thoroughly adapted to keep the separatist movement in check and secure the country's prosperity. The increase of population in Canada between 1881 and 1901 was 1,014,000; in this the French element largely predominated, and so gained greater influence. The French Canadians, however, are sincerely attached to the existing

order of things. Under the successful working of British political institutions they have developed their nationality and their racial culture in a way which would never have been possible under French supremacy, if we may judge by a comparison of the development of the Colonies which are still under the rule of France.

British Imperialism has received especial stimulus from the conflicts which have taken place during the last twenty-five years on African soil. The disturbances in Egypt in 1882 led to the occupation of Cairo and Alexandria by British troops, and subsequently to the withdrawal of the French from that extensive realm, so long the object of Anglo-French rivalry, whose fate had remained undecided even after the daring expedition of young Bonaparte

and Nelson's crushing victory of the Nile. In Egypt, again, the English have fully maintained the best traditions of their race and their administrative skill. As far as was possible, considering the chaotic condition of the country and its oppressive burden of taxation, England has established some order in the administration, improved the condition of the fellahin, established schools, and has succeeded in greatly increasing the natural fertility of the country by means of a system of irrigation, which is a triumph of modern engineering science.

By the terms of a diplomatic agreement recently made between England and France, the predominance of the former in Egypt was expressly recognised by the French. Nevertheless, this British position in Egypt proper is one rather of fact than of law, so long as that kingdom

is tributary to the Porte and recognises the Khedive as its hereditary ruler. But a very different state of affairs prevails in the Soudanese territories on the southern border of Egypt proper, where England has established her unquestionable authority by force of arms. In 1885, while fighting against the Mohammedan population of the Soudan led by the Mahdi, Gordon died an heroic death in the very town whose name to-day forms part of the title of his more fortunate successor, Lord Kitchener, who has recently been successful in placing the British Protectorate over the Egyptian Soudan upon a surer basis.

The national sentiment in regard to Imperialism, so deeply stirred by the fate of Gordon, was intensified by the recent events in South Africa. It is only to the superficial observer that the fierce war

waged at so great a cost in the Transvaal and the former Orange Free State, appears merely as an attempt at the conquest of two independent Dutch States which offered a stubborn resistance to British expansion. As a matter of fact, it was the last phase of the obstinate struggle between Dutch and British for supremacy in South Africa. But the particular difficulties amidst which this campaign was decided, and the special complications which it caused, brought England into a position of peril not exceeded since the days of her desperate conflict with the first French Empire. For it is clear that had the hold upon the Cape not been maintained, as seemed possible during a certain phase of the South African War, the loss of this protection of the route to the East might have involved in the next great internationa

conflict the loss of the British possessions in the East Indies.

The special difficulties, mentioned above, of the British position in South Africa were twofold. In the first place, England had taken Cape Colony from Holland against the wish of its Dutch population, who were numerically superior to the English inhabitants. But by the side of this problem, which may be compared with the relationship between the French and English in Canada, there appeared in South Africa a second difficulty, to which neither Canada nor Australia furnished any analogy—the question of the natives. For whilst in Australia, with 95 per cent of its inhabitants of British descent, the native population is fast disappearing, and in Canada plays a very subordinate part, throughout the whole of South Africa it

is of the greatest importance. In Cape Colony the black population far exceeds the two white races combined. In the Transvaal there were formerly fifteen natives to every white man, a proportion which has been substantially changed in favour of the white inhabitants only since the increased influx of English miners. In the former Orange Free State alone are the white inhabitants nearly equal in number to the blacks.

These relations of the white races, so recently in conflict with one another and with the coloured population which so much surpasses them in number, are a sufficient explanation of the fact that, even after the acquisition of the formerly independent Republics, the union of the South African States in a wholly self-governing confederacy like Australia and Canada must remain for a considerable time outside the

range of practical politics. But so far as was compatible with the prevalent conditions, regard was paid in the newly conquered territories to the principles of political freedom and local self-government, which form the proudest birthright of British citizens. The Legislative Council of the Transvaal, which for the first eleven months after the conquest consisted only of the heads of the administration, was increased to thirty members by the addition of representatives of the agricultural, industrial, and commercial classes. In the very first session of this enlarged body the principles of the municipal franchise and organisation were laid down, and a tariff law passed, which looked forward to the entry of the Transvaal into the South African Customs Union. The municipal franchise was extended practically to every male

and female subject (the natives being excluded): the powers of the municipalities were increased, and nothing was omitted which was likely to draw the best and ablest men into public life. The conduct of local administration by the elected representatives of the citizens themselves, practised (according to an English Blue Book)¹ by a great number of municipalities and urban district boards of the Transvaal, meant for these districts so much the greater an advance, since, as the Governor of the Transvaal reports to Lord Milner, the towns of that Colony were in the administration of local affairs before the war on about the same level as the English communities of the early Middle

¹ Correspondence relating to the affairs in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony. London, July, 1904.

Ages; and the country had been up to the present without a system, and the people without experience, of local self-government. The results were so much the more remarkable. The local elections, held scarcely eighteen months after the close of hostilities, passed off with hardly any disturbance; and in a number of cases, Dutch and British, who but a short time before had waged war against each other, united in peaceful common action for the restoration of their homes. "We may conquer countries and peoples by force of arms," says a modern Imperialist writer, "but we invariably live down racial animosity and the enmity natural to a conquered people, by the wisdom of our laws, the beneficence of our rule, the freedom bestowed on all subjects of the Crown, and the

complete protection afforded them by our Flag.”¹

In the newly conquered territories of South Africa, the British Government has brought about great improvements in a short time, and this work was the more striking, since it was necessary to re-settle the Boers in the farms which had been laid waste during the war, and could be put in order again only by government aid; and to disarm and bring back to their dwelling-places the natives, who had been in a state of disturbance everywhere during the war. In the year 1904 (according to the official report already quoted) more land was under cultivation in the Transvaal than ever before. More than 29,000 children—above twice as many as under the rule of the Dutch—were attending

¹ M. G. Jessett. *The Bond of Empire*, p. 122.

the public schools; and in the Orange River Colony the school attendance had increased by one-half since the beginning of British rule. But the same Blue Book nevertheless points out that all expenditure up to the present has scarcely sufficed to satisfy a tithe of the immediate needs, or to render adequate aid to the agricultural classes, whose difficulties were increased in some cases by the complete destruction of the native live stock.

This official statement is the strongest evidence of the ravages of the war; and, whatever point of view may be taken, this can confidently be asserted—that, even with the most optimistic calculation of the treasures hidden in the soil of the Transvaal, the addition of territory and population can be no sufficient compensation for the terrible loss of life and

property. If the war is to be justified at all, it can be only on the ground that it was absolutely necessary for the maintenance of the British hold upon the Cape, and for the permanent security of British supremacy in South Africa. Moreover, the history of the war clearly shews that, at a later date, England would have had far less likelihood of success. And the war was far from being an unmixed evil, since, for the first time, it gave practical proof of the unity of the British Empire both to its own citizens and to the rest of the world. The contingents sent voluntarily by Canada, Australia, and New Zealand fought and died for a cause, which could be regarded as affecting England exclusively only so long as her position among the Powers and her vital interests were not seriously menaced. As the extent of the South

African war, and of the efforts needed to bring it to a successful issue, was disclosed, there was shewn in India and amongst the loyalists of Cape Colony and Natal, as well as in the Colonies already named, an amount of practical sympathy for Great Britain never before realised. But it must not be forgotten that these feelings of mutual affection and confidence, and the growing consciousness of community of interests, were the necessary preliminaries to that work of organisation which the Imperialist school hoped to accomplish in the political and economic relations of the Empire. Even Mr. Chamberlain's plan for preferential treatment of the Colonies and a change in British commercial policy is not to be regarded as an end in itself, but simply as an indispensable means of reaching the goal which Mr. Chamberlain has in view—the political

and economic consolidation of the scattered Empire.

A number of other factors have been working together in this direction, and some of them at least have originated entirely outside England. Russia has been making serious encroachments in Asia, thus threatening England's interests on her most vulnerable side, and the latter's economic position, once supreme, has suffered increasingly from the rivalry of other powers, especially the United States and Germany. And, as this went on, England felt the need of drawing closer the political and economic bonds uniting her with her Colonies, and of avoiding anything which tended to weaken those relations. The growing demand in the colonial markets was to compensate English industry for the losses sustained both at home and in

foreign countries ; and moreover, it was thought advisable for the English to secure the moral and material support of their colonial kinsmen in the event of the Mother Country being threatened with fresh military complications. English Imperialism is not due solely to the development of England itself, but also to the attitude which rival foreign Powers have assumed. Nothing can shew this more clearly than the increasing sensitiveness of the whole Empire to any hostile treatment of any one of its parts by a third Power. Imperialism is not essentially of an aggressive nature ; but for Great Britain continuously to maintain and develop her vast territories and world-wide interests calls for such an expenditure of strength, and brings in its train such great responsibilities, that an attitude purely defensive in intention

may, under given circumstances, become offensive, or at least appear so to the rest of the world.

The method of governing the Colonies has perhaps contributed even more than the fact of their acquisition to the rise of the idea of Imperial citizenship. The English colonist, like the English State itself, does not regard the Colonies merely as places to be exploited, as was the wont of the Spaniard and Portuguese. When he has once taken up his abode in any place he usually settles there for life. It is the easier for him to do so because—as Dr. Baernreither has pointed out in his masterly sketch of the growth of Greater Britain in the introduction to “English Associations of Working Men”: “there, not only can the colonist maintain his language, customs, religion and law, but he finds them already

established as the natural order of things, and so what we call emigration is coming more and more to be merely a transference of labour to another part of a great whole." We shall return later to this question of English emigration ; here it is only necessary to point out that the emigrants who go to British Colonies are in no sense lost to the Mother Country.

The marvellous advance in the nineteenth century of all that relates to the means of transit and communication must also be noticed in this connexion. Steamships and submarine cables have abridged the immensity of space, have increased passenger and goods traffic, and promoted an interchange of ideas in a manner hitherto unimagined. To this must be added the results of daring exploration, and the rise and diffusion of

a literature which has made the English people as familiar with the remotest parts of its realm as with its own home, and made it (as did Seeley in his famous book on "The Expansion of England") fully conscious of the greatness of its mission in the world's history.

In any estimate of the part played by sentiment in the Imperialist movement, an historical importance must be attached to the tour round the world undertaken by the heir to the English throne in 1901. In this magnificent journey the Prince and Princess of Wales visited most of the British Colonies and dependencies, conveyed to them the grateful thanks of the Mother Country for services rendered in time of need, and received from them assurances of unchanging loyalty to England and the Crown.

When the way had thus been prepared, Mr. Chamberlain took a decisive step. In the summer of 1902, on his invitation, the Prime Ministers of the self-governing Colonies met in London to consider the question of the economic relations between the scattered parts of the Empire. Nearly the whole of the Continental press declared that this conference had no practical result; but this was an utter mistake. It appeared to be without result only because a number of purely political questions—chiefly concerned with Imperial defence and the establishment of a Federal Council and an Imperial Court of Appeal—can be settled only after a preliminary solution of the economic problem—in other words, after an understanding in regard to material interests has been reached.

II

HITHERTO this last point has only been touched upon quite incidentally. But to understand the resolutions passed by the conference, as well as to realise the true connexion of the economic aims of the Imperialists with their other efforts, a short sketch of the so-called "Chamberlain policy" appears necessary. The distinguished statesman starts with the assumption that the progress of England's most dangerous rivals, particularly the United States and Germany, damages English industry and foreign trade—the foundations of her political power—in a way which cannot be explained solely by the

remarkable economic development of those States. The harm wrought is due especially to the effect, in the United Kingdom, of foreign competition, which is rendered more severe by its commercial policy and the way it has deprived itself of all weapons of economic defence. Mr. Chamberlain then did not think of casting doubt upon the theoretical basis of Free Trade Policy, as fought out and completed in England sixty years ago by the abolition of the Corn Laws. He recognised fully the practical advantages of that system; for, although in consequence of the attitude of foreign States it had been from the first a policy not of Free Trade but only of Free Imports, yet even this one-sided policy in combination with other favourable circumstances (especially the contemporary change in the whole

system of transport) enabled England to gain immense profits for many years from that industrial supremacy which she had originally secured under a system of Protection. Mr. Chamberlain avowed himself an enthusiastic supporter of Free Trade between the separate parts of the British Empire and also with foreign countries, but only provided that the latter treated Great Britain on the same footing. But when he contemplated the actual economic conditions of the world and the growing protective movements in foreign countries, he was forced to believe that there was as little prospect of England converting the world now to Free Trade, by obstinately holding to its economic doctrine, as there had been at any time in the preceding sixty years ; and that the desired consolidation of the British dominions into a single economic whole would

be a sheer impossibility without a reform in the commercial policy of the Mother Country. Nor was this all. His enquiry led him to the further conclusion, that a change in the commercial system would be the sole means of repairing the damage, which English industry and foreign trade had suffered for many years through its persistent adherence to the old policy of free imports.

If we examine first the exchange of commodities between the United Kingdom and other countries—without regard to their connexion with the British Empire—two phenomena are immediately apparent. One is the growing disproportion between the imports and exports of the United Kingdom; and the other is the unfavourable change which has come over the character of British foreign trade. In the second half of the nineteenth century

the imports have risen rapidly, until in the year 1903 they amounted to £542,600,000.¹ The exports of British agricultural produce and manufactured goods, which were about equal to the imports in the first decade of last century, but greatly exceeded them in the middle of the century, have in the last fifty years remained far behind the constantly increasing imports. In the last quarter of a century the exports have on the whole been almost stationary; in the year 1903 they amounted to about £290,800,000, or about £251,800,000 less than the value of the imports in the same year. In fact, the proportion per head of population has considerably diminished since the beginning of the

¹ Annual Statement of the Trade of the United Kingdom with Foreign Countries and British Possessions, 1903. London, 1904.

seventies ; the quinquennial averages shewed a decline from £7.07 to £6.21 per head between 1871 and 1899. But the 252 million pounds worth of goods, which England took from other countries in excess of the amount which she sold to them, does not involve any danger to England's economic prosperity. For so long as the greater part of international trade is carried on by her ships, and she remains the principal creditor of foreign nations as she is to-day, the revenue from these two sources and from her innumerable industrial and trading enterprises abroad will more than suffice to counterbalance the unfavourable conditions of her exchange of commodities. The profits which England makes from her shipping alone are estimated at £90,000,000. But apart from the fact that the loss

on the balance of trade does no less harm to England's economic position although she may be rich enough to make good the deficiency from other sources, it is clear that the millions which pour into the country in the form of dividends on investments abroad and profits on banking enrich the investors and bring in a greater revenue to the Income Tax, but can give no compensation whatever to the working classes for the growing difficulty in obtaining remunerative employment, and the decline in the demand for labour.

The consequent damage done to English industries is increased by the second circumstance mentioned above—the change in the character of English foreign trade. Over the export and import of goods there has come a change which must ultimately be most harmful

to the future economic condition of the country. Of the total exports (which, as already remarked, are on the whole almost stationary), that part which consists of articles wholly or mainly manufactured—those which require the greatest amount of labour and are consequently the most valuable articles of export, from the point of view of the home labour market—has for many years steadily diminished. In the period 1882-1903 it fell from 90.2 to 80.7 per cent.,¹ whilst the export of raw materials and articles mainly unmanufactured rose with equal steadiness, between 1882 and 1903, from 5.1 to 12.2 per cent. The export of these raw and semi-manufactured materials (especially coal) not only means for the English worker a smaller financial gain, since less labour is generally required for

¹ Board of Trade Returns for 1903.

the production of these commodities, but also, when we consider that England is supplying her rivals with the means of competing successfully against herself, it is evident that she is working to her own disadvantage. In regard to imports the positions are reversed. The proportion of imports of raw materials is falling, whilst the influx of articles wholly or mainly manufactured is increasing both relatively and absolutely. In the year 1903 the manufactured imports were valued at £134,600,000. Of these, textiles amounted to 38.2 millions, iron, steel, and other metals and metal goods to 27.2 millions, machinery to 4.5 millions, and clothing to 3.5 millions; yet all of these are products of some of the most highly developed industries of the country. All these manufactured goods, or at any rate much the larger part, could be

produced just as well in England; and would be so produced, did the necessary protective tariff exist. But so long as this is lacking, the import of such manufactured goods — which in the main are the “dumped” surplus of German and American producers — will steadily increase. The importation has in fact risen from 121.6 million pounds in 1899 to 134.6 millions in 1903. Further, these imports come chiefly from countries which have known how to protect themselves by effective tariffs against the introduction of British goods. The damage done to England is therefore twofold: its export of goods is permanently hindered and diminished by hostile tariffs, and at the same time its home market is more and more swamped by the products of protective countries, which in the main, owing to the action of combinations

and trusts, can be offered at a price considerably lower than the cost of production of similar commodities in England, and even lower than the actual cost in the exporting country itself.

The continuance of such a state of affairs wounds the pride of a country which has been for so long almost the sole source of supply to the markets of the world, and seriously threatens its economic prosperity. Even the use of the "most favoured nation" clause has proved ineffective, since it secures for a country in foreign markets only the advantages which other States have obtained for the commodities in which they have a special interest. The only way to put an end to this condition of affairs is the establishment of a customs tariff, which shall enable England to make treaties with foreign powers on conditions corresponding to the

interests of her own industries, or, if the foreign States refuse to make such treaties, to impose on their products the same duties which they have levied on English goods. Such a policy, which is in no sense really protective, but only becomes so if foreign States take up a hostile attitude, has been announced not only by Mr. Chamberlain, but also by Mr. Balfour, the official leader of the present Conservative majority in Parliament; and the greater part of the Conservative party has accepted it.

If we now examine the trade relations of the United Kingdom with its territories beyond the sea, we find an entirely different state of affairs. It is true that the colonial trade amounts to only a little more than a quarter of the total foreign trade; but the separation of imports from exports, and the examination of each part

separately (a process necessary in any enquiry in this sphere), at once shews how advantageously in all important respects the trade of England with her Colonies compares with her trade with foreign countries. From the Colonies England receives chiefly materials for her industry, and food supplies for her ever-growing population. To them she sends in the main an ever-increasing amount of the products of her most profitable industries. In 1903, of the total export of English agricultural produce and manufactured goods, 38.2 per cent., or nearly two-fifths of the total value (111.2 million pounds worth out of 290.8), went to the Colonies. The latter took no less than 40.6 million pounds worth of textiles (36.4 per cent. of the total textiles exported), 17.1 million pounds worth of metals and metal goods (45.7 per cent.

of the total export of this kind), 7.7 million pounds worth of machinery (38.5 per cent.), and 6.3 million pounds worth of clothing (82.9 per cent.); whilst, on the other hand, the Colonies took raw materials to the amount of only 3 million pounds, or 8.5 per cent. of the total export from the Mother Country. All the necessary conditions are fulfilled which are requisite to give the steadily growing trade between England and her Colonies an almost unlimited development in the future. For, as the population of the vast but thinly peopled territories increases by emigration and natural causes, and new stretches of land are brought under cultivation, the result must be that, on the one hand, the Colonies will supplant foreign countries as the chief source of supply of raw materials and food to the Mother Country,

and, on the other hand, the latter will find in colonial markets a stronger demand for its industrial products. If it were possible to-day to consolidate the island kingdom and its possessions beyond the sea into a single great self-contained Empire, economically independent of the rest of the world, not only would the whole output of manufactured goods from the United Kingdom have a sufficient market within the British Empire, but (since the demand for manufactured goods in some parts of the Empire is largely met by foreign supplies) it would be possible to increase the English production largely and yet find a market.

The advantages which the natural conditions offer for a greater development of trade relations with the Colonies are, however, rendered less effective by the peculiar relations which exist in regard

to commercial and tariff policy. When England granted full rights of self-government to its North American and Australian Colonies, it made them entirely independent of the Mother Country in all matters of economic policy. The Colonies have used their power in this respect to surround themselves with a wall of protective duties, behind which they have striven to develop their own industries. The process has gone farthest in Canada; it is in its earlier stages in some parts of Australasia, whilst the way is being paved for it by degrees in South Africa. In all of these Colonies—in each case according to the extent of the industrial development—the free entry of British goods is prevented. As regards the importation of her manufactures, England was originally no more favoured than any foreign country; but in the last

few years Canada has inaugurated a change in this respect. Having regard to the great value of the open English market for its agricultural produce, Canada voluntarily granted English goods a preference in the customs duties in 1898, and two years later increased this preference to $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. The result was that England's exports to her North American possessions, which in the quarter of a century preceding the grant of preference had fallen by about one-third, rose to the old level. Cape Colony followed Canada's example, and granted British goods a similar preference of 25 per cent., and a like proposal is under consideration in Australia. But all these Colonies have declared that further progress in the same direction, and even the maintenance of the existing arrangement, must depend on the readiness of England to

grant a similar preference to them. Yet it is clear that the Mother Country is quite unable to treat her own sons in the lands over the sea better than her most dangerous rivals, and that the hands of the English Government are absolutely tied, so long as her present commercial system grants free admission to all goods whatever their origin. To establish the possibility of differential treatment of imports for the benefit of the Colonies, is now Mr. Chamberlain's immediate and principal object. The most natural means to that end is the imposition of an import duty on foreign food stuffs, since reduction or complete abolition of the duty in the case of colonial products would provide the desired preferential treatment. The justification, from the point of view of England, for such a policy is shewn most clearly by the

attitude of the German Empire towards Canada. Germany threatened to reply to the one-sided preference, given to the Motherland by Canada, by a surtax on its imports from Canada—a measure which would be a penalty upon Canada for the alleged infraction of Germany's treaty rights, and might also deter the other British Colonies from taking similar action. Against this attitude of Germany, England seemed as powerless as she had previously been to meet the demands made by her own Colonies, for she did not possess that power of a differential treatment of imports which would have enabled her either to increase the duty on goods coming from Germany, or to compensate Canada by granting it still further preference on its products.

The amount of the duties which

should be levied in order to render colonial preference possible is not yet definitely determined. In his speech at Glasgow, on the 6th October, 1903, Mr. Chamberlain spoke in favour of a duty of two shillings a quarter on foreign wheat, a corresponding duty on flour, a 5 per cent. *ad valorem* duty on foreign meat and dairy produce, and a considerable duty on foreign wine and possibly on foreign fruit. The harm likely to be done to the consumers by the realisation of such a programme has been grossly exaggerated by the opponents of Mr. Chamberlain's proposals. That it would mean at first an increase in the cost of bread and meat is indisputable; Mr. Chamberlain himself has announced that the weekly expenditure of the British workman—assuming that the whole duty is shifted on to the consumer—would be

increased from four to six pence. But against this he has shewn that the reduction of the duties on tea, coffee, cocoa, etc., which press heavily on the labouring classes (in whose weekly budget these constantly appear), would be a compensation, and any harm to the poorer classes would thus be avoided. Finally, it must be remembered that the anticipated increase in the cost of bread and meat would be only temporary; it would last only until the Colonies were in a position themselves to supply the needs of the Mother Country, and the attainment of that result must be greatly accelerated by the colonial preference which Mr. Chamberlain advocates. The gain which may be expected from these measures will, on the contrary, be permanent and beneficial to all the productive classes; for although the English artisan at

present has the advantage of living at a relatively cheaper cost on account of the free import of food, yet this advantage will be destitute of real value to him if, owing to the gradual narrowing of the home market, he finds himself unable to buy his food even at this reduced price.

The most immediate benefit of the changed conditions will be obtained by those engaged in agriculture, cattle-rearing and milling. Of recent years corn-growing in England has become more and more unprofitable, and owing to the fall in the price of grain, and the rise in wages, the value of agricultural land has fallen by hundreds of millions of pounds. The production of wheat in the United Kingdom has dropped by considerably more than a third in the last fifty years, and to-day only supplies about

one-fifth of the home demand. In the same period the import of foreign wheat has quadrupled. The duties proposed by Mr. Chamberlain are intended to check the growing diminution in the value of agricultural land; they are to put an end to the condition of affairs which has hitherto compelled the English farmer "to compete in the English market with *all* countries, even with those which possess artificial and natural advantages for the production of perhaps a single article." The import of food stuffs, which at present come mainly from foreign countries, is to be gradually transferred from them to the Colonies. There is not the slightest doubt that within the boundaries of the British Empire there is more than sufficient productive land to supply the principal articles of food to the whole population

at no far distant date. The duty on foreign food stuffs would help the Colonies to victory in their struggle with foreign countries for the greatest market in the world. It will also prove an encouragement to labour, which is badly needed in the vast regions still uncultivated; and it is anticipated that the increased profit of agricultural land, arising from the corn duties, may counteract the growing depopulation of the rural districts, which is so serious a social problem in England.

As preferential treatment stimulates the productive power of the Colonies, they will exercise a growing attraction on the surplus population of the United Kingdom, and will be able to offer both to the agricultural population of the Mother Country and to the dwellers in over-

crowded English towns the opportunity of healthier and better paid employment. The problem of a corresponding distribution of population is too serious, the contrast between the densely inhabited English cities and the thinly populated but cultivable lands of the Colonies is too obvious, not to claim the attention of British statesmen in the same way as the question of the exchange of commodities. But a change for the better cannot come until the English emigrants make their way to the Colonies far more than they do at present. During the second half of last century about 70 per cent. of the emigrants from the United Kingdom went to the United States, thus placing their capital and their labour at the disposal of the greatest economic rival of their native land. In the decade 1891-1900, according

to a report of the Prime Minister of Ontario published in the *Times*, of 726,000 emigrants from the United Kingdom 72 per cent. went to the United States, 13 per cent. to Canada, 7.5 per cent. to Cape Colony and Natal, and $5\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. to Australia. The population of the Australian continent, which covers an area of about 2,968,273 square miles, and is therefore about twenty-five times as large as the whole of the United Kingdom, is smaller than the population of London alone. Canada, with a territory about the size of the United States, has only $5\frac{1}{2}$ million inhabitants; and the increase of population has been less each decade since 1871. These few figures will suffice to show the absolute necessity of a greatly increased movement of British colonists to these regions, if their vast natural resources are to be fully developed.

In recent public discussions, the fear has been frequently expressed that the proposals of Mr. Chamberlain would be disadvantageous to British shipping. It was believed that a change in England's attitude towards foreign countries, such as would be involved in the preferential treatment of colonial food supplies or the adoption of a general autonomous tariff, would not only diminish the exchange of commodities with foreign countries, but would also give them an increased incentive to make themselves independent of British shipping by the augmentation of their own mercantile marine and the transport of an increasing part of their exports by their own vessels. When we consider the large number of people employed in the shipping trade and the enormous and

ever-increasing profit it yields to Great Britain (no less than about 90 million pounds sterling a year), no further proof is needed of the injurious consequences which would result from any decline in the shipping industry. But it may be argued against those who foresee loss from Mr. Chamberlain's scheme, that such loss may come about quite independently, that it has even begun already, since it is inevitably bound to happen in the natural course of events. It is true that the British transport industry is still constantly increasing, but for years past England has lost the monopoly in this, which she possessed for so long, as she has lost her monopoly in manufactures; and year by year, as foreign countries increase their mercantile marine, her supremacy must proportionately diminish. Between 1890 and

1900 the increase in the tonnage of British ships entered and cleared at foreign ports was about twenty millions, and that of foreign ships entered and cleared at the same ports during the same period of time about eighty millions, or about four times as much as the British increase. Moreover, the amount of foreign shipping which has entered the ports of the United Kingdom during the last few years has increased more than the British. The figures speak for themselves; between the years 1890 and 1901, the total increase of the mercantile marine of the British Empire was 1,400,000 tons, the total increase of that of foreign fleets in the same time 2,200,000 tons, or 800,000 tons more than the British.¹ For

¹ Cf. Mr. Chamberlain's Liverpool speech of October 27, 1903.

a long period of years, indeed, the supreme position of Britain's mercantile marine seems to be assured; in 1902, of the $13\frac{1}{4}$ million tons of goods carried between the United Kingdom and her colonial possessions (commerce between the individual Colonies is excluded), $11\frac{3}{4}$ million tons were carried beneath the British Flag.¹ At the present day England is responsible for nearly two-thirds of the world's traffic overseas, but her share in the transport of Russian, Norwegian, Swedish, German, and especially Italian goods has fallen appreciably in the last decade. This tendency cannot be checked; it is even possible that Mr. Chamberlain's fiscal measures may hasten it on. But as that policy

¹ "British Shipping and Fiscal Reform," by the Marquis of Graham. *The Nineteenth Century and After*, August, 1904.

seeks to develop the trade between England and her Colonies in every way, it will also do everything to preserve the British carrying trade as far as possible from the peril with which it is threatened by foreign States. Only practical experience in the future can shew to what degree the increase of trade between England and her possessions beyond the seas will be able to counterbalance the decline which has set in.

III

WE hope to have indicated in the above the magnitude of the questions involved in the grant or refusal of the apparently insignificant duties on food stuffs. On the decision in regard to this tax depends the future attitude of the British Colonies—whether the population of the single parts of the Empire, so closely connected by ties of descent, law and culture, shall bind themselves into a single community of interests and subsequently into a living and permanent organisation ; or whether the various parts shall strive for their own particular temporary advantages, and thus politically drift further and ever further

asunder. The history of England shews conclusively that its political strength is inseparable from its economic power, has grown out of it, and cannot be maintained without it in the future. In regard to colonial preference and the allied question of change in general commercial policy, the resolutions passed by the Conference of Colonial Premiers (held in London in the summer of 1902), though not offering a definite solution, yet shew clearly the way in which this should be sought, and leave no doubt as to the readiness of the Colonies to hasten its attainment. They are as follows :—

1. "That this Conference recognises that the
" principle of preferential trade between the United
" Kingdom and His Majesty's dominions beyond the
" seas would stimulate and facilitate mutual com-
" mercial intercourse, and would, by promoting the

"development of the resources and industries of the
"several parts, strengthen the Empire."

2. "That this Conference recognises that, in the
"present circumstances of the Colonies, it is not
"practicable to adopt a general system of Free Trade
"as between the Mother Country and the British
"Dominions beyond the seas."

3. "That with a view however to promoting the
"increase of trade within the Empire, it is desirable
"that those Colonies which have not already adopted
"such a policy should, as far as their circumstances
"permit, give substantial preferential treatment to
"the products and manufactures of the United
"Kingdom."

4. "That the Prime Ministers of the Colonies
"respectfully urge on His Majesty's Government the
"expediency of granting in the United Kingdom
"preferential treatment to the products and manu-
"factures of the Colonies either by exemption from
"or reduction of duties now or hereafter imposed."

5. "That the Prime Ministers present at the
"Conference undertake to submit to their respective
"Governments at the earliest opportunity the principles
"of the resolution, and to request them to take such
"measures as may be necessary to give effect to it."

These resolutions of the Colonial Premiers, confirmed by the preference already granted to British goods by some of the Colonies, indicate clearly the attitude of the latter towards the question of tariff reform. For the moment they regard complete free trade between the various parts of the Empire as impracticable, but at the same time they declare themselves ready to take the first and decisive step towards it. The answer of the Mother Country to the question raised by the Colonies will be the issue at the next Parliamentary election. If the united Opposition is successful, the question of tariff reform will not be raised by the British Government, at least for the present. If the programme of the present governmental majority is carried out, a conference of the leading statesmen

of the great self-governing Colonies, and of representatives from India and possibly of the greater Crown Colonies, will certainly be summoned, and will have to come to an agreement with England's representatives as to whether a reciprocal agreement on the tariff question is desirable, and if so, under what conditions it can best be realised. Mr. Balfour himself pronounced in favour of such a conference in his speech at Edinburgh on October 3, 1904, and Mr. Chamberlain most readily accepted the proposal. Both these statesmen are agreed that, if the consolidation of the British Empire is to be permanently secured, it must not be due to compulsion, but to the voluntary decision of the Colonies alone. "As regards our relations with our self-governing Colonies," said Mr. Chamberlain some few years ago, "we have

arrived at a point when we must recognise once for all that these relations depend entirely on their free will and unreserved agreement." Mr. Balfour goes so far in his effort to avoid even the suspicion of undue influence that he does not desire the agreement, which may be reached at a future conference of statesmen from the various parts of the Empire, to come into force until the sanction of the constituencies has been obtained by means of a further election. "I am so hopeful," he said in his great Edinburgh speech, "that an arrangement would be come to, and I am so fearful if it be come to without having behind it the public opinion of all the free governing communities concerned, that I do not desire to see this matter hastily forced upon public opinion. What we are aiming at is the consolidation of the British Empire . . . and what we should

all aim at is to proceed to this great end with the wisest caution, which will enable every man concerned to feel that he is not building some temporary structure which a wave of public opinion or a temporary majority may upset, but that he is building for all time a great edifice which neither the wind nor the waves can affect, and which shall be solidly based upon the common consent of the great self-governing communities. . . ."

There can be scarcely any doubt that an agreement could be reached if the necessary negotiations were opened soon, and if England were in the position to reciprocate the preference given by the Colonies. It is essential that the spirit of such a conference must not be the one of cold calculation necessary in counting up

shillings and pence ; but one of eager readiness to make the sacrifices needed in so great a task, and already so laudably displayed by at least some colonial statesmen. Sacrifices will have to be made by both sides ; the Colonies will need to abandon the attempt to found and develop industries for which they have neither special capabilities nor the requisite raw materials, and whose commodities can be more cheaply produced by the Mother Country. And sacrifices will also be required from the Mother Country, which, for the sake of the permanent security ultimately given to its entire agricultural and industrial production, must submit to the unavoidable temporary disadvantages to some interests arising from a change in its commercial system, and must place its whole economic relations with foreign

countries on a fresh basis. But from the Imperialist standpoint the failure of negotiations of this kind, should they be undertaken soon, is less to be feared than that British statesmen should be in a position to undertake to conduct them only at a time when a favourable outcome is less probable than it is at present. The longer the time allowed to elapse, the less will be the hope of securing with the Colonies an agreement which will permanently safeguard the interests of the Mother Country. For the greater the industrial development of the Colonies, the less will be their readiness to sacrifice the interest of any branches of their industries to the desire of the Mother Country to obtain an effective preference for its own commodities, and the greater the probability that the Colonies will conduct their affairs in

their own way, and make commercial treaties with foreign States without regard to their negligent Mother Country.

Therefore, ever since the beginning of his great campaign, Mr. Chamberlain has urged on his countrymen that the time for successfully negotiating with the Colonies is a limited one. He has made it clear that what would have been an easy task ten years ago is a difficult one to-day, and in ten or fifteen years' time will be almost impossible to accomplish. Will his warnings be sufficiently heeded? It is impossible to predict the result of the next General Election; the recent bye-elections seem to augur favourably for the success of Opposition in the main struggle which cannot be far distant. Even the overwhelming majority gained by the present Government at the last General Election

is no guarantee that a change of majority may not take place at the forthcoming one — a change which happens from time to time almost as inevitably as a law of nature. The Conservative Government has been encouraged by its great majority to apply its leading principles in various important matters of home politics in a way which, under ordinary circumstances, would certainly be prejudicial to the length of its administration. No impartial judge of the situation as a whole can deny that the realisation of Mr. Chamberlain's proposals, at any rate those concerning the taxation of foreign food stuffs in the interest of preferential treatment of the Colonies, will secure a real and lasting advantage for Great Britain in the future. Even the theoretical basis of unlimited free trade shews the

untenable position of those of its supporters who also profess to believe in Imperialism. For Cobden's dictum that a country makes a mistake in producing itself what it can obtain more cheaply from abroad, may be reasonably applied to the island kingdom and the single Colonies, but loses its meaning when applied to the British Empire as a whole. This Empire, which extends over every climate and zone, and comprehends industrial Great Britain as well as the greatest and (what will be in the future) the richest agricultural districts in the world, can best produce within its own boundaries almost everything requisite for man's needs. Nevertheless, the comparatively small voting strength of the agricultural interest in England, which is primarily concerned in Mr. Chamberlain's proposals, and the

fact that the industrial classes as a whole are not sufficiently clear-sighted to answer the catch question of the Opposition, "Do you want your bread taxed?" in a way which shews a proper appreciation of their permanent interests — these two things render it extremely probable that the recognition of the value of Mr. Chamberlain's proposals will not be sufficiently great to carry them at the next election. Yet this recognition need not necessarily come too late to secure the final aim of the Imperialist movement. The Opposition, united only by the desire to oust the present majority from power, has no common and practical policy for dealing with the question which has stirred the nation to its depths. The so-called "Little Englanders," who care nothing about the Colonies, and see in the needs of the latter no reason for

breaking away from the system of free trade at any price, can at least lay claim to consistency in their conduct. But it is absolutely impossible to understand the way in which the Liberal Imperialists manage to combine the idea of a World Empire, as expressed so often with almost extravagant fervour by their most popular leader, Lord Rosebery, with the obstinate rejection of the only practicable means of securing that end, namely, the reform of the British commercial system.

The Federal Council and similar institutions do not satisfy the Colonies. An Imperial Parliament in which the representatives of the self-governing Colonies would have votes is a remote possibility, and one scarcely likely to be realised. The only real means of bringing the Colonies and the Mother Country closer together is the recognition and

mutual promotion of their essential economic interests. Moreover, without this, the organised participation of the Colonies in imperial defence cannot be expected.

This particular matter has been from the first an essential part of the Imperialist programme. "The idea of imperial unity," as the Duke of Devonshire once said, "includes the best possible organisation of the defensive forces of the British race in every part of the world." The defence of the Empire is entrusted primarily to the British navy. It is the task of the navy to defend the home islands and the widespread possessions of the British Crown beyond the seas, and under all circumstances to keep the seas open for British trade, especially for transport of the food supply needed by the inhabitants of the United

Kingdom. The oversea trade carried on under the British Flag—a trade which is greater than that of all other nations of the world together, is impossible without the protection of Britain's naval power. The British navy, in regard both to its incomparable traditions and to the vast resources which stand at its service, is the proudest force in the world. According to tradition its origin can be traced as far back as the days of the great King Alfred. The destruction of the Spanish Armada in the reign of the mighty Queen Elizabeth is the precursor of England's world-renowned naval victories of later times. Since those days the navy has constantly added to its laurels ; and the events of the last three hundred years, the history of the foundation of Greater Britain, are also the history of its glorious achieve-

ments. It has waged war successfully with all the great naval powers one by one, and then, in a deadly struggle lasting twenty-one years against France and her allies, it proved irrefutably its superiority upon the seas over them all combined. But the greatness of the task imposed on the British navy by the nature and requirements of the British Empire allowed no pause in its development. In recognition of the absolute necessity of preserving British naval supremacy under all circumstances, the English Parliament in 1889 laid down the principle that the navy should be equal in number of fighting units to the next two greatest navies, and should exceed them in fighting power. England's former political opponent, France, has quite recently made a considerable increase in her naval armaments; the

United States have employed an ever-increasing part of their inexhaustible resources in enlarging their fleet, and in the Far East Japan has laid down the solid foundations of its future maritime power. Finally, Germany has adopted a comprehensive naval policy, the carrying out of which guarantees for that country, which already has a powerful navy at its disposal, the command, in a comparatively short time, of a naval force quite adequate to its important political and economic interests.

The facts just mentioned have forced England into an enormous expenditure in order that she might be a match for all possible combinations of the other great naval powers. In 1887 her naval force numbered 62,500 men, and these have since been increased to 127,500, exclusive of reserves. The outlay on

the navy, which amounted to about 11.5 million pounds sterling in the financial year 1884-85, according to the report of 1899-1900, reached 26 millions. In the estimate for 1904-5 the expenditure amounts to 36.9 million pounds, besides 5.1 millions for naval buildings (harbours, barracks, schools, etc.), mostly covered by loans, making a total of 42 million pounds sterling. The cost of the building of new ships (exclusive of repairs), which appeared in the budget of 1894-5 as an item of 4.4 million pounds, has risen in 1904-5 to 12 million pounds—an amount which, according to Lord Brassey, an eminent authority from whose articles on the question we take our figures, exceeds the sum total of the respective estimates of France, Russia and Germany put together. The whole expenses of the navy are

borne by Great Britain at present, for the diminutive contributions from Cape Colony and Australia—the latter given only under the express condition that certain ships shall be constantly stationed in Australian waters—are of no practical importance. The position is the same with the army. In comparison with the task laid upon it, this army is very small (the total force in Great Britain and all its dependencies except India is only 227,000 strong), but owing to the system of enlistment it is the most costly in the world. The Army Budget for 1903-04 was £34,425,000, and the entire expenditure for military and naval defence (apart from the £17,782,000 expenditure on the army in India, which was defrayed by the revenues of that country) amounted in the same year to a total of £69,705,000. With the exception of a few hundred

thousand pounds contributed by the Colonies towards the maintenance of the army and navy, the whole cost is borne by the inhabitants of the Mother Country. This state of affairs cannot continue for long ; it is clearly unfair that countries like Australia, Canada and Cape Colony, which would be almost undefended against foreign powers without the protection of the British Fleet, should spend their increasing revenues entirely on their home needs, and that the constantly growing expense of defending the Empire should be a burden on the 42 million inhabitants of the island kingdom alone.

The South African War has been sufficient proof that the single parts of the British Empire are not chary of their help when their Mother Country is in distress. But this voluntary

support, given as occasion required, would prove inadequate in a hard struggle with a greater military power than the Boers. The position of England at the close of 1900 was so critical that every precaution must be adopted to prevent its recurrence. In order to fulfil their unquestionable duty of taking an adequate share in the defence of the whole Empire, the Colonies must decide to furnish in the future regular contingents of troops to the army and navy, and also contribute regularly to the costs of imperial defence. Any agreement as to the right of the Colonies to share in the settlement of political questions affecting the whole Empire (however this right may be exercised) must have as a necessary sequence their organised co-operation in the defence of the Empire. The special

nature of Great Britain's position in the world, however, and the enormous and ever-increasing expenditure necessary to maintain it, make it comprehensible that the responsible statesmen do not wish to postpone the settlement of this particular question until an arrangement has been reached which will give the Colonies a voice in Imperial policy. Therefore it is not improbable that a future conference of representatives from the more important parts of the British Empire may pass notable resolutions concerning a closer economic union, and also as regards the co-operation of the Colonies for imperial defence.

But the programme of the military reformers in England is by no means confined to inducing the Colonies to take a systematic share in the defence of the Empire. Ever since the South

African War practically everyone has realised the inefficiency of the old military administration. Although the question of army reform has not passed the stage of professional consideration and preliminary discussions in Parliament, it is yet possible to indicate with tolerable certainty the course which it will take. The question of reform in land defence concerns the efforts of the Imperialists only so far as they lay the greatest emphasis on the strength and efficiency of the whole British fighting power, which should be adequate for the world-embracing interests of the Empire. Those who are interested in the details of this question should be referred to the remarkable book recently published, entitled "England und die Engländer" (England and the English), by Dr. Karl Peters, the well-known authority

on colonial politics. In the sixth chapter of this work there is a remarkable description of the present military organisation, and of the reform which is being made in the army, as well as of the special difficulties which will have to be met in bringing these reforms to an issue—difficulties which arise from the Parliamentary system and from the character of the English people, who strenuously resist all compulsion from outside. At present all that can be said is that the principle of general conscription, as it is practised in the great continental countries, will not be adopted for the English standing army. For, now as ever, the navy is considered the first and most reliable line of defence for the island kingdom, and so long as people believe in the certainty that within twenty-four hours of a

conflict threatening the safety of Britain's coasts, an overwhelming number of warships could be brought together and a hostile invasion checked at the outset, the country can dispense with the system of conscription, with its far-reaching influence on its economic and social life.

The instructions lately issued for an alteration in the distribution of the separate squadrons, and for the assurance of their mutual connexion and support, are intended to secure the efficiency and war readiness of the British navy at any moment. The recent incident at Hull when, immediately on receipt of the news, England was able to develop at once an overwhelming naval strength which made the issue of the anticipated conflict absolutely certain, furnished very flattering evidence to Great Britain, and

a very instructive illustration to foreign Powers, of the war readiness of the fleet. Consequently the method hitherto in force of recruiting the regular army, *i.e.* the system of enlistment, will scarcely be affected by the changes in organisation through which Great Britain will have to pass. On the other hand, in the opinion of the majority of the Royal Commission appointed to consider this question, the militia and the volunteers should be put in a position to perform their task of forming an effective support to the regular army and of defending the country, in case of necessity, against foreign invasion; and this should be done by requiring that every citizen in good health and of an age when he is able to bear arms should receive proper training, and be bound when necessary to take part in national defence.

An economic union and a common organisation of national defence are indispensable if an Imperial union in its true sense is to be formed by the various parts of the British Empire, which cover more than a fifth of the surface of the globe and contain a quarter of its inhabitants. They give shelter to people of the most varied races and colours, of every creed, and of the most diverse customs and systems of law. To them belong, besides the oldest and richest manufacturing country in the world, those great self-governing communities like Canada, Australia and Cape Colony, which have their permanent representatives in London, and whose conditions and lines of development we have sketched in this pamphlet; further, there are the colonies such as Malta, Mauritius, Cyprus, Jamaica, etc., which have only partial self-government and

representation ; further, territories with entirely nominated councils, like Ceylon, British North Guinea, Hong Kong, Trinidad, etc.; and lastly, those possessions which are governed by the Crown by Order in Council, like the rock of Gibraltar, so dear to national sentiment, or are entirely dependent on the Foreign or the Colonial Office. No empire of the Old World or the New has understood, as England has done, how to give to each of the numerous nations over whom she rules the forms of government and administration best adapted to its requirements and stage of development. Only observe what an enormous difference there is between the triumphant democracy of the young Australian States and the powerful Empire of India, over the greater part of which England rules to-day by the right of conquest alone ! The former is the most

progressive community in the world as regards conditions of labour; it has universal adult male and female suffrage for the Federal Parliament, and a closely organised labour party fully conscious of its aims, and yet by no means extremist in its general political views—a party which has nearly a third of the votes in the House of Representatives and more than a third of those in the Senate, and was powerful enough to form a Federal Government from its most capable and trustworthy adherents in the April of 1904. On the other hand, we have an Empire stretching from the snow-covered heights of the Himalayas to far into the heat of the tropic zone—a country whose area is roughly two-fifths that of Europe, and by far the greater part of which is governed by delegates of the central authority in London, under

the supervision of the English Parliament. How much has been done since British supremacy has been firmly established in this wonderful empire, of which the 295 millions of inhabitants speak no less than 145 different dialects, and belong to every great religion of the human race — Brahmanism, Buddhism, Christianity and Mohammedanism. And how much more remains to be done in the future for a country in which devastating plagues and droughts still cost hundreds of thousands of lives, and where, according to the last census,¹ only one man in 10 and one woman in 144 can read or write !

“There is a sense in which we are all Imperialists,” Mr. Chamberlain once pointed out, “for there is not one among us who is not proud of what our countrymen have accomplished by carrying

¹ The last census was taken on March 1, 1901.

civilisation, order, justice and religion to the remotest corners of the earth." But the goal of Imperialism, which Mr. Chamberlain himself has set up for his nation, is of another and more tangible nature. He indicates the working means by which all the countries over which the British Flag waves may be drawn together in the future into a true and living unity. The conception of Imperialism which he has in his mind is not to deprive single individuals or national communities of their rights. On the contrary, the continual advance towards democracy in the constitutional and other institutions of the Mother Country, as well as in the great self-governing Colonies, is unmistakable. And since the Anglo-Saxon race knows better than any other how to impart and develop, side by side with personal and political freedom, the means

required for making a reasonable use of it, and therefore for its permanent security, no retrogression in this path is to be expected. Private enterprise and personal freedom have made England what it is to-day, and the maintenance of national individuality and the enjoyment of the greatest possible amount of local autonomy and political independence (so far as they are reconcilable with the unity of the Empire) are necessary for the prosperity of the great whole, and are recognised as such in the constitutions of Canada, Australia and South Africa.

Such a process does not involve any decrease in the importance of the British Crown; on the contrary, the continuous development and the closer union of the great British territories beyond the seas must give a decided increase to the authority and influence of the Sovereign,

the living symbol of the unity of the Empire. The problem of Imperialism appears so great, novel, and pregnant with consequence, that the old boundaries between the historical political parties in England, which, as a rule, determined their attitude towards the great political questions in the past, have already at the present stage to a great extent lost their meaning and become obliterated. Conservatives and Liberals have altogether changed places in their conception of the Imperialist problem. But whatever course the events of history may take, the goal indicated by Mr. Chamberlain is fully worthy of the enthusiastic devotion of the best of the nation, even if they cannot hope to reach it in their own lifetime.

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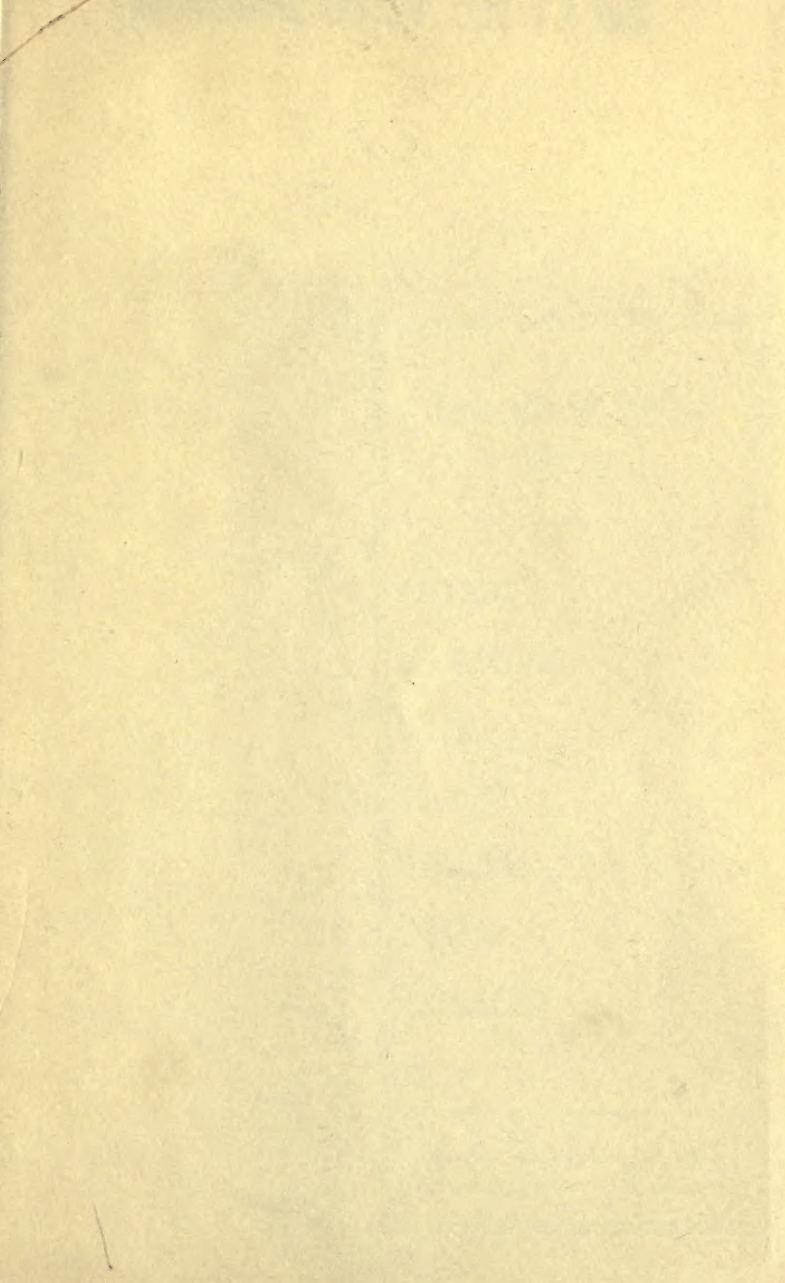
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